

Ballot initiatives may threaten court victory

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

As I have said in another article in this newsletter, it is possible that the California Supreme Court may rule that the ban on same-sex marriage in California is unconstitutional.

However, when the Massachusetts Supreme Court issued a similar ruling, they gave that state a six-month grace period to bring their laws and processes into compliance with the court's ruling. If the California Supreme Court did something similar, they might make their decision effective as of January 2008.

The problem is that several groups are now circulating petitions to amend the California constitution to ban same-sex marriage. If they get enough signatures on one or more of these petitions, the issue could be voted on as soon as Election Day, November 4. If the majority of people were to vote for the initiative, their vote would nullify the decision by the California Supreme Court, and same-sex couples would indeed not be allowed to marry in California.

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No statistic to be proud of

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

According to a report recently released by the Pew Center on the States, more than one of every 100 adults in the US is in jail or prison. This rate of jailing our citizens is higher than in any other nation in the world.

China ranks second both in the raw number of adults in jail or prison, and in the percentage of its adults in jail or prison. Whereas we jail 1,000 in every 100,000 adults, China jails only 750 of every 100,000 adults. Whereas China currently imprisons 1.5 million of its adults, we imprison 2.3 million of ours. Those raw numbers of imprisoned people become starker when you realize that China has a population of 1.3 billion (ours is 0.3 billion). Their total population is so much larger than ours, that you would expect their prison population to be larger as well. But it isn't; their prison population is actually about 800,000 lower than ours.

There is more bad news. According to the Pew Center report, while one in 30 men between the ages of 20 and 34 sits behind bars, for black males in that age group the figure is one in nine. Yes, that's right: one in nine black male adults sits in prison or jail!

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Supreme court hears marriage case

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

On March 4 the California Supreme Court heard a historic case. As the result of this hearing, they have agreed to rule on the question of whether or not it is unconstitutional in California to deny same-sex couples the right to marry.

The hearing was the result of six cases on this question that have been appealed to the Supreme Court. The cases were combined into one case for the hearing on same-sex marriage. Four of the cases were filed by the city of San Francisco and 19 same-sex couples seeking the right to marry, and two were filed by traditional values groups opposing such a right. The most famous of these cases is the suit by the city of San Francisco seeking to overturn the court decision that invalidated the marriage licenses of about 4,000 same-sex couples issued by the city in 2004.

The plaintiffs asking the court to overturn the ban on same-sex marriage were represented by a total of four attorneys, one from the city, one from the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and two attorneys for other plaintiffs. It is

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Lambda Letters progress report

Letters collected

February, 2008
In all of 2008

34,464 letters & e-mails
71,283 letters & e-mails

Dollars spent

February, 2008
In all of 2008

\$4,838
\$10,444

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Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Our mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; women; and people of low economic status. We urge elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly, except in December, by Lambda Letters Project Inc.

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Reduce illegal business activities

By Rebecca Chamow, legislative analyst

The illegal activities of businesses operating in California's underground economy does a great deal of harm to the state, its workers, and the many law-abiding businesses operating legally and legitimately, according to state regulations.

Research has shown that, despite the many enforcement efforts in recent years, the underground economy in California is flourishing. Therefore, it is in the public interest to create a meaningful, coordinated enforcement effort involving the state's enforcement of labor and tax laws to target those employers that operate in the underground economy in flagrant violation of law.

Assemblyman Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) has taken a first step in this effort by authoring AB 2879. It would establish a process for closer monitoring of employers who may be violating wage and hour laws or paying too little in payroll taxes to the state.

This bill would require the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, in consultation with the Franchise Tax Board and the Joint Enforcement Strike Force on the Underground Economy, to develop and implement a set of standards that, if met by an employer, would trigger a recommendation for an audit or investigation by appropriate state authorities. The audit would search out violations of statutes relating to employee wages, hours, and working conditions.

This bill, which would take effect in January 2009, would require the state labor commissioner to take action to facilitate audits and investigations of employers who meet the standards required by this bill. The standards and regulations set forth in this measure would create a process for dealing with the underground economy and reducing the illegal activities of businesses trying to cheat the system and doing damage to honest businesses operating throughout the state. 

Protect battered immigrants

By Mary Martinez, legislative analyst

In addition to the obstacles that all victims face in leaving an abusive relationship, battered immigrant women face language barriers that can make access to the criminal justice system difficult. Given that the most common entry point to the criminal justice system is through contact with a law enforcement official, it is problematic that most law enforcement agencies do not have protocols or mechanisms in place for aiding victims or witnesses with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Law enforcement officers often rely on friends, neighbors, children of the battered woman, or even the abuser to act as an interpreter for the victim. The use of unqualified interpreters can result in a failure to respond by law enforcement, inadequate or inaccurate police reports which lead to a failure to prosecute, wrongful arrest and conviction of the victim, and further violence against the victim that has, on some occasions, even resulted in death. Lack of communication with limited-English proficient victims, witnesses, suspects, and community members not only jeopardizes the safety of domestic violence victims, but also creates evidentiary and investigative challenges.

SB 1523 by Sheila Kuehl (D-Los Angeles) requires law enforcement agencies to adopt procedures and techniques to ensure timely, effective, and accurate communication with LEP persons at the scene of a domestic violence incident. It also mandates law enforcement training curriculum to include procedures and techniques to ensure effective communication with victims and witnesses at the scene. Finally, it allows the Victims Compensation and Government Claims Board to reimburse LEP crime victims for the expenses of language interpreter services that are incurred during the law enforcement investigation and prosecution of a crime, or during medical services that became necessary as a direct result of the crime.

Please send in a letter of support to your state senator so that immigrant battered women can finally access the same services as everyone else. 

Support pregnancy disability placards

By Alex Widmann, legislative analyst

Current law grants drivers special parking privileges if their vehicle show a placard, special license plate, or temporary disability card, or if they transport disabled individuals. Among the privileges is the ability to park in special parking spaces. Pregnant women in their last trimester could benefit from being able to access these privileges with the consent of their physician.

According to the American Pregnancy Association, women toward the end of their pregnancy can expect to experience a wide variety of symptoms, including back pain, pelvic ache and hip pain, fatigue, swelling of the feet and ankles, and even shortness of breath. At that point in the pregnancy, women also often gain between 25 and 35 pounds.

A new bill currently in the state assembly would take the special needs of women in their third trimester of pregnancy into account by redefining the terms of temporary disability. AB 1940, proposed by Assemblyman Chuck Devore (R-Irvine), would allow women to claim this disability from their third trimester through their first two months of pregnancy.

It is important to recognize that pregnancy places heavy demands on the female body and requires special considerations to be made. Allowing women the right to use disability placards in the same way as people experiencing other temporary medical conditions is essential and shows the value placed on their health and the health of unborn babies.

This concept is not new; some private companies have already created special parking places alongside disability spots especially for pregnant women. Leaders in this effort include home furnisher RC Willey and search engine company Google, among others. It is an important recognition of women's rights and needs to acknowledge the strain pregnancy can place on the body.

Please support this important legislation and urge your assemblymember to vote in favor of it. 

Allow medical marijuana outside the workplace

By Lorraine Rinker, legislative analyst

The Compassionate Use Act of 1996 (Proposition 215) was passed by California voters, giving seriously ill Californians "the right to obtain and use marijuana for medical purposes." In 2003, SB 420 was signed into law establishing the right of a qualified patient to use medical marijuana outside the workplace. Such landmark legislation has made significant inroads to improving the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. But there is still a long road ahead.

Early this year, the California Supreme Court ruled (in *Ross v. Raging Wire Telecommunications*) that an employee using medical marijuana as permitted by California law may be fired solely because of their status as a medical cannabis patient. This single move by the California Supreme Court invalidated the right to work for 250,000 individuals by taking away their freedom from discrimination in employment.

AB 2279 seeks to reverse a court decision that puts every medical cannabis patient in jeopardy of losing their job without due cause. Introduced by Assemblymember Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) and coauthored by Patty Berg (D-Eureka), Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley), and Lori Saldana (D-San Diego), this bill clarifies that an employer may not discriminate against an employee in hiring, termination, or any term or condition of employment if the discrimination is based solely on the employee's status as a qualified medical cannabis patient who uses their doctor-recommended medication outside of work and not during working hours in compliance with existing law. (Source: AB 2279 fact sheet.)

Additionally, this bill presents itself as a responsible solution by including an exception for safety sensitive positions in which medical cannabis-affected performance could endanger the health and safety of others. For instance, positions such as health care providers, school bus drivers, and operators of heavy equipment

Support LGBT training in senior homes

By Shirin Buckman, legislative analyst

Experts estimate that there are between 1.75 and 3.5 million LGBT seniors in this country. These numbers are expected to increase as more and more people are "out," rather than in the closet.

Unfortunately, LGBT seniors face discrimination in many institutional settings, and they are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to live alone, live in poverty, and feel depressed. AB 1729, authored by Carol Migden (D-San Francisco), asks the California Department of Social Services to implement training programs for senior center staff on the sensitivities of serving LGBT seniors so they can help deal with these issues.

There are two primary reasons why SB 1729 is good legislation. First, there are already too few LGBT senior care homes, and many of those that do exist have waiting lists. Some seniors are concerned that sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination would result in substandard care because of staff assumptions of health risks. For example, stereotypical beliefs that HIV is related to the LGBT community may cause senior facility staff to deliver poorer care. Consequently, LGBT seniors may be reluctant to come out in a heterosexual-oriented facility. Therefore, it is important for meaningful training to be conducted for senior home staff that will be catering to LGBT individuals. This is particularly true for transgender seniors; staff must be trained in appropriate pronoun usage, housing, and privacy issues.

Second, because of the stigma related to the LGBT community, especially among older generations, LGBT seniors may not have adequate family care to cater to their specific needs, such as bereavement support. For example, when an LGBT senior's partner dies, there must be an understanding that the partner is a spouse, and the feelings of loss are exactly the same as for heterosexuals. Similarly, senior facility staff must understand domestic

Continued from column 1

are exempted to protect employers from liability and to ensure public safety.

The benefit of this legislation is that it would:

- ◆ Preserve the rights of employers to take action against employees that come to work impaired or consume medical marijuana at the workplace.
- ◆ Prevent an employer from discriminating against a legal medical marijuana patient in hiring, termination, or any term of employment based on his or her status as a patient or based on a positive test for medical marijuana use that occurred during non-working hours outside the workplace.
- ◆ Enable a legal patient who is the victim of employment discrimination to file a civil action in state court.
- ◆ Preserve the right of employers to take any necessary precautionary measures in the terms of employment for any legally qualified patient working in a safety-sensitive position.

And just as important, here's what AB 2279 will not do:

- ◆ This bill will not require employers to accommodate smoking marijuana in the workplace or during working hours under any circumstances.
- ◆ This bill does not require employers to hire or continue to employ medical marijuana patients who work in safety-sensitive positions.
- ◆ This bill does not expose employers to any criminal liability or violate federal drug-free workplace laws.
- ◆ This bill does not force an employer to violate any state or federal law.

Please write to your Assemblymember and ask him or her to cosponsor AB 2279. With the signature of Governor Schwarzenegger, California can implement this reasonable and responsible solution that protects patients, employers, and public safety. 

April legislative update

This month you may notice that our list of bills has a slightly different format. This is because we are using a new automated process, provided by Capitol Track, to create the list. We hope you will find the new look useful. One critical change appears on the status line of each bill. If the bill has been referred to a committee, but has not yet been given a date to be voted on, it will simply say that it has been referred to the such-and-such committee. If it has been assigned a date to be voted on, that date will appear on the status line with the "set for hearing."

Note: Because of our early deadline for submitting information to the newsletter, the status of some of the following bills may have changed by the time you read this. To get the latest information, visit lambdaletters.org and click the Legislative Update link in the main menu. The status of the bills in that list is updated daily.

Here is a list of the bills we are tracking at this time.

HIV/AIDS issues

AB 1894 (Krekorian, D)

Purpose: Would require health insurance plans and Medi-Cal to cover the cost of HIV testing and AIDS testing whether or not HIV is related to the primary diagnosis. Would require hospital emergency rooms to offer HIV testing and testing for AIDS.

Status: 2/21/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.
LLP position: Support.

Reading Study Participants Needed

UC Davis Adult Development Lab is currently searching for people aged 18-80 to participate in a study on reading comprehension.

The study consists of two 2-hour sessions scheduled one week apart.
English must be your native language.

The Lambda Letters Project is searching for participants who are willing to take part in the study and donate the \$40 stipend provided by UC Davis to help us achieve our mission.

Please contact Myeva Thierry at 916.444.8501 or e-mail Alp1234@aol.com to sign up and receive additional information.

AB 1984 (Swanson, D)

Purpose: Would require the state to make voluntary, confidential, HIV tests available to state prisoners. Would allow the state, with written consent of the prisoner, to share the person's HIV/AIDS status with other public agencies to help them determine the person's eligibility for public health and social service benefits.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S. (Refers to 3/25/08 hearing)

LLP position: Support.

AB 2279 (Leno, D)

Purpose: Would prohibit an employer from discriminating against a person because the person is a qualified patient or primary caregiver permitted to grow or use marijuana.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Coms. on Jud. and L. & E.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2737 (Feuer, D)

Purpose: Would allow a court to order a test for HIV or other communicable diseases from any arrestee whenever the blood or other bodily fluids of this person comes into contact with the skin of a peace officer, firefighter, or emergency medical person.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Watch.

AB 2743 (Saldana, D)

Purpose: Says the state will not cooperate in federal raids or prosecutions for marijuana-related offenses if the target is a qualified patient, a designated caregiver, or other person covered under state medical marijuana laws.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2899 (Portantino, D)

Purpose: Would require the state to develop an HIV counseling program available to all persons who receive HIV testing at a state-funded testing site or clinic.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1098 (Migden, D)

Purpose: Would state that medical marijuana dispensaries are legal under California law and would relieve them of liability for sales taxes owed prior to October 2005. In early years it was not clear that they should be charging sales taxes.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Senate Revenue and Tax Committee. Set for hearing April 9.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1184 (Kuehl, D)

Purpose: Would require clinical laboratories to report all CD4 count test results to the local health officer within seven days of the completion of the CD4 count test. If a CD4 count test result is related to a case of HIV infection, the

local health officer would be required to report the case of HIV infection or AIDS to the state within 45 days of receipt of the report. CD4 count test results would be confidential and may not be used as evidence in court. If the clinical laboratory CD4 count test result is not related to a case of HIV infection, the local health officer shall destroy the laboratory CD4 count test report.

Status: 3/3/08 – Referred to Senate Health Committee. Set for hearing March 26.

LLP position: Watch.

SB 1600 (Kuehl, D)

Purpose: Would require charter schools to provide HIV/AIDS education to students.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

SJR 20 (Migden, D)

Purpose: Would urge the federal government to stop prosecuting medical marijuana dispensaries that are legal under California law.

Status: 3/3/08 – Referred to Senate Health Committee. Set for hearing March 26.

LLP position: Support.

Economic issues

AB 2 (Dymally, D)

Purpose: Would continue a program that provides affordable health insurance to those who are otherwise uninsurable due to medical history.

Status: 9/11/07 – To inactive file on motion of Senator Perata.

LLP position: Support.

AB 100 (Mullin, D)

Purpose: Would authorize a bond issue, if approved by the voters, of \$9 billion for public grade schools, high schools, colleges, and universities to construct or improve educational facilities.

Status: 2/7/08 – Referred to Com. on RLS.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1780 (Galgiani, D)

Purpose: The state is supposed to reimburse counties for public mental health programs. They failed to do so for several counties. This bill will put in place regulations to prevent that from happening again.

Status: 2/7/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1821 (Portantino, D)

Purpose: Would require a more open, visible process when decisions are being made on compensation of Cal State University executives.

Status: 3/4/08 – In Assembly Health Committee: Set, first hearing. Hearing canceled at the request of author.

LLP position: Support.

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Legislative update

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AB 1887 (Beall, D)

Purpose: Would require that certain health care service plan contracts and health insurance policies issued should cover the diagnosis and treatment of a mental illness, as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV.

Status: 2/21/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1900 (Nava, D)

Purpose: Would allow counties to increase fees for certified copies of death certificates by up to \$3 per copy if needed to fund services to senior citizens. Would also allow counties to increase fines for elder abuse by 10% and use the money for senior services.

Status: 3/12/08 – From Assembly Public Safety Committee: Do pass, and re-refer to Assembly Committee on Judiciary.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1934 (Ma, D)

Purpose: Would state that a student will be eligible for a high school diploma if he or she takes the exit examination the maximum number of times possible and does not pass one or both parts of the examination, completes all remediation opportunities provided by the school, maintains a cumulative attendance record of at least 95%, has never been expelled from a secondary school, completes the courses required for high school graduation, and maintains at least a 2.5 grade-point average in those courses.

Status: 3/10/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Watch.

AB 1966 (Garcia, R)

Purpose: Would require schools in limited income neighborhoods to offer a healthy breakfast beginning with the 2009-10 school year. Waives this requirement if the governing

board of a school district or county office of education declares that the school cannot afford it. Would require the State Department of Education to provide technical assistance to help the school overcome the barriers to providing these breakfasts.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1996 (Swanson, D)

Purpose: Would allow people convicted of drug felonies to qualify for food stamps after getting out of prison if they successfully complete a government-recognized drug treatment program while in jail.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on HUM. S.

LLP position: Watch.

AB 2097 (Coto, D)

Purpose: Would authorize a redevelopment agency to provide construction, operation, and maintenance funding from the Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund to emergency shelters and supportive services to permanent housing for those who are homeless or have special needs.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on H. & C.D.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2178 (Garrick, R)

Purpose: Would lower the annual corporation tax of most corporations from \$800 to \$200 per year. This would lower state government income and increase pressure to cut budgets for health and social service programs

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Rev. & Tax.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2229 (Huffman, D)

Purpose: Would provide for one dental examination per year for Medi-Cal beneficiaries living in long-term care facilities as a covered Medi-Cal benefit, to the extent funds are made available in the annual Budget Act.

Status: 3/13/08 – From committee chair, with

author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to Com. on Health. Read second time and amended.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2331 (DeSaulnier, D)

Purpose: Would allow California to provide financing for the construction, rehabilitation, and purchase of housing for persons and families whose income is up to 150% of area median income.

Status: 2/22/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2368 (Fuentes, D)

Purpose: Would exclude the value of a licensed motor vehicle from consideration when determining or redetermining CalWORKs eligibility.

Status: 3/6/08 – Referred to Com. on Hum. S.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2372 (Coto, D)

Purpose: Would limit tuition and fees charged at the California State University and the University of California to those in effect during the 2008-09 academic year. Beginning in 2014, any increase in tuition and fees would be limited to the annual percentage change in the California Consumer Price Index. Would also increase income taxes for those with income of over \$1 million to help cover costs of colleges which are not covered by tuition received.

Status: 3/6/08 – Referred to Coms. on Higher Education. and Rev. & Tax.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2463 (Davis, D)

Purpose: Declares legislative intent to enact legislation to address the epidemic of hypertension and diabetes among low-income persons and persons of color in California.

Status: 2/22/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2586 (Torrico, D)

Purpose: Would require that, in many circumstances, rental tenants be given 60 days notice to vacate.

Status: 3/10/08 – Referred to Coms. on Jud. and U. & C.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2716 (Ma, D)

Purpose: Would provide that an employee who works in California for seven or more days in a calendar year be entitled to paid sick time.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Coms. on L. & E. and Jud.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2726 (Leno, D)

Purpose: Would extend to 2012 a pilot program

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in the Department of Public Health to buy healthy foods and make them available to people in low-income neighborhoods. Would also allow the program to be carried on with funds from any source, not just on appropriation of adequate funds by the legislature.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Coms. on Health and Agri. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 2844 (Laird, D)

Purpose: Current law requires that a redetermination of eligibility for food stamps and CalWORKS be done quarterly. This bill would change that semiannually.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Hum. S. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 2879 (Leno, D)

Purpose: Would establish a process for closer monitoring of employers who may be violating wage and hour laws or who may be paying too little in payroll taxes to the state.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on L. & E. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 2897 (Hancock, D)

Purpose: Would raise maximum state income tax to 10-11% of taxable income. Would raise the maximum alternate minimum state income tax to 8.5% of taxable income. This would raise state revenue and reduce pressure to cut vital health and social service programs.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Rev. & Tax. **LLP position:** Support.

AB 2929 (Hancock, D)

Purpose: Would require the Department of Corrections to develop a comprehensive reentry program for parolees to assist in the successful reintegration of parolees into the community. This would include providing a copy of any parole plan to the sheriff of the county into which an inmate is released.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S. **LLP position:** Support.

AJR 3 (Dymally, D)

Purpose: To ask Congress and the president to increase funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program and to appropriate the entire amount to the states.

Status: 2/1/07 – Referred to Com. on U. & C. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 32 (Steinberg, D)

Purpose: Would allow all California children whose family income is under 300% of the federal poverty level to have access to the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs. Also would eliminate the rules that deny coverage to some based on citizenship or immigration status.

Status: 9/11/07 – Placed on inactive file on request of Assemblymember Bass. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 42 (Torlakson, D)

Purpose: Would exempt CalWORKS recipients from work if they have applied for, but not yet been accepted by an approved education program.

Status: 9/11/07 – Placed on inactive file on request of Assemblymember Nunez. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 840 (Kuehl, D)

Purpose: Would create a single-payer health care system to provide health insurance to all residents of the state of California.

Status: 7/10/07 – Read second time. Amended. Re-referred to Com. on Appr. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 1101 (Cedillo, D)

Purpose: Would allow taxpayers, until 2014, to designate on their tax returns that an amount in excess of their tax liability be contributed to the Emergency Food for Families Fund.

Status: 3/13/08 – Set for hearing in Senate Revenue and Tax Committee on April 9. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 1132 (Migden, D)

Purpose: Would say that foster children on Medi-Cal do not have to reapply for Medi-Cal when they become 18 and age out of foster care.

Status: 3/13/08 – From committee with author's amendments. Read second time. Amended. Re-referred to Com. on Health. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 1136 (Alquist, D)

Purpose: Would prohibit anyone except a lawyer from charging a fee to represent or aid someone in the procurement of public social services.

Status: 3/4/08 – Set for hearing in Senate Human Services Committee on March 25. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 1147 (Calderon, D)

Purpose: Would require that Medi-Cal services be suspended, but that eligibility cannot be terminated, when a youth is sent to jail. This would allow for faster reestablishment of Medi-Cal services when the youth is released.

Status: 3/13/08 – From committee: Do pass, but first be re-referred to Com. on Appr. Re-referred to Com. on Appr. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 1199 (Yee, D)

Purpose: Would reduce the maximum sentence for a murder committed by someone under 18 from life without possibility of parole to 25 years to life.

Status: 2/14/08 – From print. May be acted upon on or after March 15. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 1250 (Yee, D)

Purpose: Would require that youth jail facilities take steps to increase communication between juvenile inmates and their families, and to keep families informed of the health and other conditions of their children in juvenile facilities. This has been shown to reduce additional crimes by youth once they are released from jail.

Status: 3/4/08 – In for hearing in Senate Public Safety Committee on April 1. **LLP position:** Support.

SB 1341 (Padilla, D)

Purpose: Would allow people to save money to secure permanent rental housing, or make rent payments, to overcome an episode of homelessness, without those savings being considered excess assets that might disqualify them for CalWORKS.

Status: 3/4/08 – Set for hearing in Senate Human Services Committee on March 25. **LLP position:** Support.

SCR 69 (Denham, R)

Purpose: Would require that all votes on budget bills in committees, as well as on the Senate and Assembly floors, require a two-thirds majority to pass.

Status: 1/9/08 – Introduced. To Com. on RLS. **LLP position:** Oppose.

LGBTI issues

AB 250 (DeVore, R)

Purpose: Would allow the owner of real property to complete a brief document transferring the property to another person upon the death of the owner. The property transferred would not have to go through the probate process.

Status: 7/16/07 – In committee: Set, first hearing. Hearing canceled at the request of author. (Corrected July 13.) **LLP position:** Support.

AB 624 (Coto, D)

Purpose: Would require foundations with assets over \$250 million to report the makeup of their personnel, including the race and gender of board members and staff, and information about the communities served (including the LGBTI community) by the organizations receiving grants from the foundation, and grants made to organizations in which half or more of the governing boards or staff come from ethnic minorities, and about grants made to organizations which serve the economically disadvantaged.

Status: 2/12/08 – From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to committee. Read second time, amended, and re-referred to Com. on B., P. & E.D. **LLP position:** Watch.

Legislative update

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AB 1757 (Hayashi, D)

Purpose: Would add the domestic partners of victims of a crime to a list of people allowed to testify at the parole hearing of a person who committed the crime.

Status: 2/27/08 – Re-referred to Com. on Pub.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2085 (Huff, R)

Purpose: Would end a current law that prohibits public schools or school activities from promoting bias against the LGBTI community.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Coms. on Education. and Jud.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2086 (Huff, R)

Purpose: Would require a school to notify parents when sexual orientation or gender identity are to be discussed in the classroom and tell parents how to get their children excused from the class.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Coms. on Education. and Jud.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2567 (Leno, D)

Purpose: Would require the governor to proclaim May 22 of each year as Harvey Milk Day. Would encourage schools to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on that date.

Status: 3/10/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2654 (Laird, D)

Purpose: Would amend existing nondiscrimination provisions to be consistent with the nondiscrimination protections in the Unruh Civil Rights Act and Government Code Section 11135, which prohibits discrimination in state-funded programs and activities. Would thus improve protection of the LGBTI community, among others.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Jud.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2673 (Feuer, D)

Purpose: For some counties, under current law if a deceased retiree has a child under 18, and a domestic partner, the child would get the retiree's pension, not the domestic partner. This bill would make the domestic partner the primary beneficiary in these counties even when there is a surviving minor child.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on P.E., R. & S.S.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1066 (Migden, D)

Purpose: Would allow heterosexuals to register as domestic partners even if both of them are under age 62.

Status: 3/11/08 – From committee: Do pass, but first be re-referred to Com. on Appr. Re-referred to Com. on Appr.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1113 (Migden, D)

Purpose: Says the property taxes will not be increased on a property co-owned by two people when the deceased person's interest is transferred to the surviving co-owner.

Status: 1/31/08 – To Com. on Rev. & Tax.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1729 (Migden, D)

Purpose: Would require training for employees of senior care facilities to prepare them for the sensitivities of serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors.

Status: 3/13/08 – To Com. on RLS.

LLP position: Support.

People of color issues

AB 158 (Ma, D)

Purpose: This bill would allow people who have hepatitis B to qualify for Medi-Cal before they become disabled in hopes of preventing disability.

Status: 2/7/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 512 (Lieber, D)

Purpose: Requires that when a business person negotiates specified loans or extensions of credit primarily in the languages of Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean, then that person must provide summaries of the loan or credit documents in those languages.

Status: 9/10/07 – Re-referred to Com. on RLS pursuant to Senate Rule 29.10. Re-referred to Com. on B., F. & I. pursuant to Senate Rule 29.10.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1154 (Leno, D)

Purpose: Would require the state to develop a diabetes risk reduction pilot program within the minimum number of counties necessary to represent the demographic populations in the state to review, analyze, and report on the outcomes from integrative care of diabetes through proactive prevention.

Status: 2/7/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1758 (DeVore, R)

Purpose: Would end the right of certain undocumented immigrants to in-state tuition at California's public colleges and universities.

Status: 3/11/08 – In committee: Hearing postponed by committee. (Refers to 3/4/08 hearing)

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 1871 (Coto, D)

Purpose: Would allow people to get a teaching credential in bilingual or cross-cultural education by completing an approved program, or by a combination of examination and completing an approved program that consists of coursework or a combination of coursework and examinations.

Status: 3/11/08 – Re-referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1882 (Garrick, R)

Purpose: Would require police to notify the federal government if they think a person arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, is an illegal alien.

Status: 3/3/08 – Re-referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 1930 (Torrico, D)

Purpose: Would require California to take steps to make sure that people with limited English skills will be adequately protected in an emergency situation or natural disaster.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on G.O.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2034 (Nunez, D)

Purpose: Would require the State Board of Education to ensure that instructional materials include American Indians and encourage instruction about American Indians, emphasizing California Native Americans.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2056 (De Leon, D)

Purpose: Would allow schools to use certain unexpended funds received from the state to provide intensive instruction and services to help pupils who are English language learners in grades 9 or 10 who are at risk of not passing one or both portions of the California High School Exit Examination.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2064 (Arambula, D)

Purpose: Would require the State Board of Education to ensure that instructional materials include instruction on the Vietnam War, the "Secret War" in Laos, the role of Southeast Asians in that war, and the refugee/immigrant/new American experience.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2076 (Fuentes, D)

Purpose: Would enact legislation to ensure that employers enrolled in the federal E-Verify program (which helps them verify the residency status of employees) receive training materials and comply with state and federal antidiscrimination laws.

Status: 2/20/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 21.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2083 (Nunez, D)

Purpose: Would allow certain undocumented immigrants to qualify for institutional financial aid award scholarships not paid for out of the state general fund.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Higher Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2089 (DeVore, R)

Purpose: Would prohibit the state from contracting with employers who knowingly hire undocumented immigrants. Would require state contractors to inform the state within three days of discovering that an employee is an undocumented immigrant.

Status: 2/20/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 21.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2102 (Walters, R)

Purpose: Would require state agencies to use the federal E-Verify system to check whether their employees are legal permanent residents.

Status: 2/20/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 21.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2106 (Hayashi, D)

Purpose: Would ban the manufacture or sale of cosmetics with certain ingredients.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2141 (Tran, R)

Purpose: Would require the Department of Corrections to verify the immigration status of new inmates and to cooperate in the deportation of undocumented immigrant inmates.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on PUB. S.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2199 (Plescia, R)

Purpose: Would require the state to cooperate with the federal government in the investigation, apprehension, or detention of undocumented aliens in the state.

Status: 2/21/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2200 (Plescia, R)

Purpose: Would enact legislation to prohibit any person from concealing, harboring, or sheltering undocumented immigrants.

Status: 2/21/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2201 (Plescia, R)

Purpose: Would require state contractors to verify the employment eligibility of its employees

in this state by using the federal E-Verify system, or any successor to that system.

Status: 2/21/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2204 (De La Torre, D)

Purpose: Would require title companies that process documents regarding the sale or transfer of ownership of real estate to remove from those documents any clauses that violate non-discrimination laws.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Jud.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2317 (Walters, R)

Purpose: Would prohibit a person from registering to vote unless he or she can provide proof of citizenship.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on E. & R.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2327 (Caballero, D)

Purpose: Declares the intent of the legislature to ensure that people affected by an emergency (including those who speak limited English) are provided with humanitarian services and other requisite relief services.

Status: 2/22/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2333 (Price, D)

Purpose: Would require peace officer training regarding the use of inappropriate racial slurs, racial profiling, and the inappropriate use of force. Would also allow public access to records related to complaints of police misconduct, providing public hearings for police misconduct, and providing adequate discipline standards for police misconduct.

Status: 2/22/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2340 (Arambula, D)

Purpose: Would require school districts to schedule classes for English learner adults at times that would allow working adults to participate.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2405 (Arambula, D)

Purpose: Would permit a county to assess up to \$250 upon conviction for domestic violence, to be used to fund domestic violence prevention programs that focus on assisting women who are immigrants or refugees or who live in rural communities.

Status: 3/10/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2418 (Huff, R)

Purpose: Says that no undocumented immigrant charged with certain violent or gang-related

felonies shall be eligible for bail or released pending trial. Would also require the sheriff to notify federal authorities of the person's arrest and charges. Would also require the sheriff, district attorney, and trial courts of each county to record the status of any undocumented immigrant charged, booked, or convicted of a felony and report this information to federal authorities so that reimbursement may be sought from the federal government for the cost of incarceration.

Status: 2/22/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2419 (Huff, R)

Purpose: Would require the police to notify the federal government when they arrest someone for driving under the influence if they suspect the person arrested is an undocumented immigrant.

Status: 2/22/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2420 (Huff, R)

Purpose: Says no one can enact an ordinance or policy that prohibits police from trying to discover a person's immigration status or that prohibits the police from arresting or booking a person for being an undocumented immigrant.

Status: 3/10/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2421 (Huff, R)

Purpose: Would require state and local authorities to investigate and prosecute complaints that an employer is employing undocumented immigrants.

Status: 3/6/08 – Referred to Coms. on L. & E. and Jud.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2601 (Benoit, R)

Purpose: Would withhold vehicle license fee income from cities that declare themselves sanctuaries for undocumented immigrants.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on L. Gov.

LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2689 (Tran, R)

Purpose: Would require manufacturers of nail care products with hazardous substances in them to create documents, in the Vietnamese language, describing the hazards of the products and to provide them, when requested, to employers and employees in the nail care industry.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on L. & E.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2812 (Silva, R)

Purpose: Would allow the governor or local officials to declare a state of emergency in response to the presence of illegal immigrants.

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Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on G.O.
LLP position: Oppose.

AB 2826 (Mendoza, D)

Purpose: Would cause a vote to be held on whether the president and Congress should create a pathway to citizenship for certain undocumented immigrants.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Coms. on Jud. and E. & R.

LLP position: Watch.

AB 2902 (Swanson, D)

Purpose: Would require the Office of Multicultural Health to encourage the use of community-based health care workers to provide better health outcomes for underserved communities through the various public health programs.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.
LLP position: Support.

AB 2974 (Solorio, D)

Purpose: Would require the state to establish a pilot English learner program, for use in schools with a high percentage of English learners.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Education.

LLP position: Support.

AB 3027 (De Leon, D)

Purpose: Would require all required disclosures by health care service plans and health insurers relating to benefits and cost-sharing to be made available to consumers in the 12 most prominent languages spoken in California.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Health. From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to Com. on Health. Read second time and amended.

LLP position: Support.

ACA 14 (Strickland, R)

Purpose: Would require people to provide evidence of their United States citizenship or right to lawfully reside in the United States when applying for a non-emergency, state-funded public benefit.

Status: 2/25/08 – Read first time.

LLP position: Oppose.

AJR 44 (Huff, R)

Purpose: Would urge Congress to amend the constitution to deny US citizenship to individuals born in the United States to parents who are neither US citizens nor legal permanent residents.

Status: 1/24/08 – From printer.

LLP position: Oppose.

AJR 47 (Fuentes, D)

Purpose: Would urge the Congress and the president to establish an official federal holiday

to commemorate Cesar E. Chavez on his birthday, March 31.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on G.O.
LLP position: Support.

SB 60 (Cedillo, D)

Purpose: Would allow the state to issue driver's licenses to certain undocumented immigrants when approval of that action is approved by the federal government as allowed under the federal real ID act.

Status: 1/17/08 – From Third Reading: Pass and Retain.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1094 (Cedillo, D)

Purpose: Would establish the Office of Immigrant Affairs whose job would be to ensure the integration and civic participation of new citizens in the state.

Status: 3/4/08 – Set for hearing in Senate Human Services Committee on March 25.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1115 (Migden, D)

Purpose: Says that race, religious creed, color, national origin, age, gender, marital status, sex, or genetic predisposition shall not be considered to be a cause or other factor considered in any determination of the amount of workers compensation benefit to award to an injured worker.

Status: 3/10/08 – In Assembly. Read first time. Held at Desk.

LLP position: Watch.

SB 1134 (Oropeza, D)

Purpose: Would establish a state-recognized Indian reservation for the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, a non-federally recognized Indian tribe, effective immediately upon the certification of specified facts by the city or cities in which the reservation is located.

Status: 2/1/08 – From print. May be acted upon on or after March 2.

LLP position: Watch.

SB 1214 (Cedillo, D)

Purpose: Would add the unconstitutional deportation during the Great Depression of citizens and lawful permanent residents to Mexico to the instruction that is required to be provided in social studies in grades 7 to 12, and to the material that the department is required to incorporate into publications that provide examples of curriculum resources.

Status: 3/12/08 – Set for hearing in Senate Education Committee on April 2.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1301 (Cedillo, D)

Purpose: Would allow the state's public colleges and universities to offer scholarships to certain undocumented immigrants.

Status: 3/12/08 – Set for hearing in Senate

Education Committee on April 2.

LLP position: Support.

SJR 18 (Wyland, R)

Purpose: Would require that all election ballots and ballot pamphlets be printed only in English.

Status: 1/17/08 – Re-referred to Com. on E., R. & C.A.

LLP position: Oppose.

Women's issues

AB 184 (Dymally, D)

Purpose: Enacts a Medi-Cal rate increase for family planning clinical office visits.

Status: 1/7/08 – To inactive file on motion of Senator Kuehl.

LLP position: Support.

AB 225 (Beall, D)

Purpose: Would strengthen laws against making repeated harassing phone calls against others.

Status: 6/20/07 – From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to committee. Read second time, amended, and re-referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Support.

AB 268 (Calderon, Charles, D)

Purpose: Would allow a person to refuse to testify in court because of threats of harm to the witness by the person who does not want the person to testify.

Status: 1/7/08 – In committee: Hearing postponed by committee. (Refers to 6/26/07 hearing)

LLP position: Support.

AB 499 (Swanson, D)

Purpose: Would create a pilot project to train county workers to assist children that have been sexually exploited including those made to work as prostitutes.

Status: 2/7/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1275 (DeSaulnier, D)

Purpose: Would allow counties to increase fees for copies of marriage certificates, birth certificates, fetal death records, and death records, by up to \$4 to fund oversight and coordination of domestic violence prevention, early intervention, and prosecution.

Status: 6/20/07 – In committee: Set, first hearing. Hearing canceled at the request of author. From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to committee. Read second time, amended, and re-referred to Com. on L. Gov.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1771 (Ma, D)

Purpose: States that a prior conviction of domestic abuse is a good-cause basis for a judge to issue a current restraining order upon request. Provides an additional monetary penalty

for those convicted of domestic violence, with that money going to domestic abuse prevention programs. Requires superior courts to release certain publicly available information in domestic abuse cases. Also would create a website listing people convicted of domestic abuse.

Status: 3/11/08 – Re-referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Support if website list of offenders is removed from bill.

AB 1774 (Lieber, D)

Purpose: Would require health insurance plans to pay for annual gynecological cancer screening.

Status: 3/6/08 – Re-referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1822 (Beall, D)

Purpose: Says a court shall deny any temporary or permanent award for spousal support to a party who has been convicted of a sexual offense in which the victim was a minor.

Status: 2/7/08 – Referred to Coms. on Jud. and Pub. S.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1935 (Fuller, R)

Purpose: Would allow taxpayers to designate on their tax returns that a specified amount in excess of their tax liability be transferred to the California Ovarian Cancer Research Fund.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Rev. & Tax.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1940 (DeVore, R)

Purpose: Would allow a pregnant woman, in her third trimester, to qualify for a disabled parking placard.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Trans.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1955 (Plescia, R)

Purpose: Under existing law, in most cases a judge in any criminal action may not read or consider any written report of a law enforcement officer or witness, or other information or affidavit, after a complaint or accusatory pleading is filed but before a plea, finding, or verdict is made, without the defendant's consent. This bill says the judge can review those things when considering whether to issue a restraining order in a domestic violence case.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Support.

AB 1962 (De La Torre, D)

Purpose: Would require health insurers to provide maternity care as a basic benefit.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2035 (Ma, D)

Purpose: Would increase funding for mammograms for women enrolled in the Breast

and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program.

Status: 2/19/08 – From printer. May be heard in committee March 20.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2052 (Lieu, D)

Purpose: Would allow tenants who have been victims of domestic abuse or stalking to cancel a lease agreement and get a refund of their deposit, before the termination date of the lease.

Status: 2/28/08 – Referred to Com. on Jud.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2068 (Aghazarian, R)

Purpose: Would authorize the sheriff or marshal, for any order or injunction relating to harassment, workplace violence, domestic violence, or elder abuse, for which the sheriff or marshal provides service of process, to notify the petitioner by electronic or telephonic means within 24 hours after service of process that the order or injunction has been served on the respondent.

Status: 3/11/08 – Re-referred to Com. on JUD.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2129 (Beall, D)

Purpose: Would require the state to implement a model program for the universal screening, assessment, referral, and treatment of pregnant women and women of childbearing age who are suffering from drug and alcohol abuse.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2208 (Price, D)

Purpose: Would create the Lupus Education and Awareness Program (LEAP) within the Department of Public Health. The program would conduct a needs assessment, public awareness activities, professional education programs, directory of lupus services, and a grant program for private nonprofit organizations. Lupus is nine times more common in women than in men.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2234 (Portantino, D)

Purpose: Would require health insurance plans and health care service plans to cover a variety of tests for breast disease instead of just requiring coverage for mammography as is now the case.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2304 (Plescia, R)

Purpose: Would prohibit a petition for name change, by a victim of domestic abuse or stalking, from being published by any means or in any public forum, including a hardcopy or an electronic copy.

Status: 3/5/08 – Referred to Com. on Jud.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2887 (Berg, D)

Purpose: Says the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program for low-income and uninsured and underinsured individuals will cover digital and analog mammography where mammography services are otherwise covered under the program.

Status: 3/13/08 – Referred to Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support.

AB 2972 (Soto, D)

Purpose: Would consolidate services and programs provided to female offenders in prison and on parole, including sharing relevant offender information such as medical, mental health, and treatment history, improving communication between prison and parole officials, and ensuring that care is not interrupted during a woman's transition from prison to parole.

Status: 2/25/08 – Read first time.

LLP position: Support.

ACR 15 (Lieber, D)

Purpose: Would commemorate January 2007 as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

Status: 2/1/07 – Referred to Com. on RLS.

LLP position: Support.

AJR 42 (Garcia, R)

Purpose: The 1994 federal Violence Against Women Act established a policy of allowing immigrants who are victims of domestic violence to seek permanent legal residence. The bill would urge Congress not to take that right away.

Status: 1/23/08 – From printer.

LLP position: Support.

SB 265 (Romero, D)

Purpose: Would state the Division of Juvenile Justice shall explore options to provide programming for female offenders outside of division facilities. On or before January 1, 2009, the division shall transfer all female offenders out of division facilities.

Status: 9/4/07 – Placed on inactive file on request of Assemblymember Bass.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1348 (Cedillo, D)

Purpose: Would require the Department of Public Health to provide breast cancer screening services to women who are 38 years of age and older if they are otherwise eligible to receive breast cancer screening services under existing state and federal law.

Status: 3/3/08 – Set for hearing in Senate Health Committee on March 26.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1523 (Kuehl, D)

Purpose: Would require that written notice to victims of domestic violence regarding the

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person alleged to have committed domestic violence, shelter services, community services, and restraining orders be translated into the most prevalent languages spoken by local limited-English-proficient communities.

Status: 3/5/08 – To Com. on Pub. S.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1578 (Florez, D)

Purpose: Would require the California State University, and request the Regents of the University of California, to establish an Office of Gender Equity (OGE), and to appoint a Title IX compliance officer who reports directly to the OGE within each respective university system. This bill would further require mandatory Title IX and gender equity training for all athletic department personnel and executive level university management.

Status: 3/5/08 – To Coms. on Education. and Jud.

LLP position: Support.

SB 1682 (Kuehl, D)

Purpose: Would require Medi-Cal to pay more for family planning visits.

Status: 3/13/08 – To Com. on Health.

LLP position: Support. 

No statistic to be proud of

Continued from page 1

The racial disparity for women also is stark. One of every 355 white women aged 35 to 39 is behind bars, compared with one of every 100 black women in that age group.

Some might say that those in jail are there because they broke the law. They deserve to be there. I think that point is arguable. Even if it is true, however, there is something seriously wrong with a society in which that many people are either tempted, or forced, to break the law.

The cost of jailing all those people is extreme too. California now faces a \$16 billion budget shortfall, yet spent \$8.8 billion on corrections last year.

We at Lambda Letters are working hard to make this a better world where people can live and prosper in peace and where people are helped to be the best they can be rather than being tempted to be the worst. Please help our work by always sending us your signed letters, persuading others to join our effort, and contributing all you can to the cost of our work. 

Ballot initiatives

Continued from page 1

It could be even worse than that. Some of the petitions being circulated would also repeal domestic partners' civil rights that have been enacted by the state legislature over the past several years.

In order to qualify for the ballot in November, the initiatives' supporters must gather at least 694,354 signatures. The deadline for when signatures must be submitted to the secretary of state's office varies depending on when the initiative was first submitted to the secretary of state for permission to start the signature gathering process. One such initiative has already passed the signature submission deadline and failed because they did not gather the minimum number of valid signatures.

Four other initiatives are still in the signature gathering stage. They may yet qualify for the November ballot. All of them would amend the California constitution to ban same-sex marriage. Three of them would also amend the constitution to terminate the rights that domestic partners have received as the result of many bills approved by the state legislature since 1999.

Pending initiatives

Here is a list of the initiatives showing the number assigned to it by the secretary of state, the purpose of the initiative, and the date by which 694,354 valid signatures must be submitted. If that number of valid signatures is not submitted by the deadline, then the initiative fails.

Petition 1264

Purpose: To ban same-sex marriage and take away the rights of domestic partners.

Due date for signatures: 2/08/08.

Status: Failed.

Petition 1293

Purpose: To ban same-sex marriage and take away the rights of domestic partners.

Due date: 4/21/08.

Status: Pending.

Petition 1298

Purpose: To ban same-sex marriage.

Due date: 4/28/08.

Status: Pending.

Another bad initiative

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

Last year the legislature passed SB 777, which the governor also signed. This law prohibits a teacher from giving instruction—and a school district from sponsoring any activity—that reflects adversely upon persons because of their sexual orientation or gender, among other reasons. Lambda Letters worked hard to help get this law passed.

SB 777 has made the political conservatives in our state go ballistic. As a result, they have introduced an initiative statute to repeal these protections. If that initiative passes, it would be permissible for schools to express views that reflect badly on the LGBTI community.

The supporters of the initiative (#1334) are gathering signatures now in hopes of getting it on the November 4 ballot. They need 433,971 valid signatures to qualify it for that ballot. This is a lower signature count than what is required for the constitutional amendments discussed elsewhere in this newsletter. That is because Initiative #1334 is an initiative *statute*, not a constitutional amendment. An initiative statute enacts a law that cannot be overturned by the legislature. It can be overturned only by another vote of the people. But it does not actually amend the state constitution.

The deadline for gathering enough valid signatures is July 25. If enough signatures are not gathered by that date, the initiative will fail. We will keep you posted. 

Petition 1309

Purpose: To ban same-sex marriage and take away the rights of domestic partners.

Due date: 5/27/08.

Status: Pending.

Petition 1322

Purpose: To ban same-sex marriage and take away the rights of domestic partners.

Due date: 6/30/08.

Status: Pending.

We will keep you posted as to the progress of these initiatives. 

Your organizations can help us

By Boyce Hinman, chief lobbyist

Each time a bill is voted on in a committee, or on the floor of the Senate or Assembly, a legislative staff member creates an analysis of the bill. The analysis describes what the bill does, the arguments for and against the bill, and what organizations have expressed support or opposition to the bill.

In theory, each time a legislator is asked to vote on a bill, he or she (or his or her staff) read the report and see who favors or opposes the bill. That helps them decide how to vote for it. If many organizations that the legislator respects express support for or opposition to the bill, that can have a significant effect on how the legislator votes.

By signing and returning the letters that we send you, you are helping us influence our legislators. However, if you belong to an organization that might be interested in the bills we work on, I urge you to read the list of bills in this newsletter. If you think your group would support or oppose the same bills we support or oppose, please bring those bills to the attention of your group. Urge them to write a letter of support or opposition to the bill and send it to the bill's author. When they do that, the name of their organization will be added to the list of supporters or opposers in the bill analysis. That could really help persuade legislators to vote the right way.

The letters do not have to be complicated. All they need to do is state the name of the organization, name the bill, and whether the organization supports or opposes the bill. The organization's letter can be sent to the legislator at the following address:

Legislator's name
The California State Legislature
Sacramento, CA 95814

I hope you can help us move towards a more just society in this way. 

Supreme Court hears marriage case

Continued from page 1

interesting to note that the state, which opposed a change to current law, was represented by two attorneys, one representing the attorney general and another representing the governor. This prompted one justice to ask whether the attorney general and the governor disagree as to what basis there is for claiming that the ban is constitutional. The implication was that, if these two parties disagree as to what basis justifies the ban, then perhaps one or both of them is wrong.

There are seven justices on the Supreme Court. Thus, if a minimum of four justices agree to overturn the ban, the supporters of marriage equality will have won. Same-sex marriage will be legal in California. Based on the questions asked by the justices, it appears that three, or possibly four, justices may be leaning toward overturning the ban.

An attorney connected with Lambda Letters thought justices Moreno, Kennard, Werdeger, and Chief Justice George were leaning toward overturning the ban. A court reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* agrees with this list except for Justice Werdeger. He thinks she was leaning the other way. However, he noted that she was one of two justices who said the marriage licenses of the 4,000 couples married in San Francisco should not have been overturned. That decision was one of the decisions being appealed on March 4. From the questions being asked, it did appear that justices Chin, Baxter, and Corrigan were leaning towards upholding the ban on same-sex marriage.

Nothing is certain until the decision is announced, however. The tenor of the questions being asked does not always reveal the true views of the judge. The court has 90 days in which to issue a ruling in the case. So we may hear the outcome as late as early June.

If you did not get to see the Supreme Court hearing on March 4, you can see a video of it by going to www.calchannel.com. Click the word "watch" under the words "California Supreme Court: Same-Sex Marriage." 

LGBTI issue

Continued from page 4

partner laws, medical benefits, inheritance, and visitation rights. These staff must also be capable of educating LGBT seniors in their care on their legal rights.

The Lambda Letters Project would like to emphasize to the state legislature that upon passage of this legislation, it is important for the "training" to not solely consist of a brochure, like the "training" currently provided for LGBT domestic violence shelters. Meaningful training consists of physically present individuals to train senior facility staff so that they substantively understand and are able to ask questions on LGBT issues with which they are not familiar.

SB 1729 is crucial legislation to support our aging LGBT population. Please write your legislator to support it. 

Discrimination Complaints

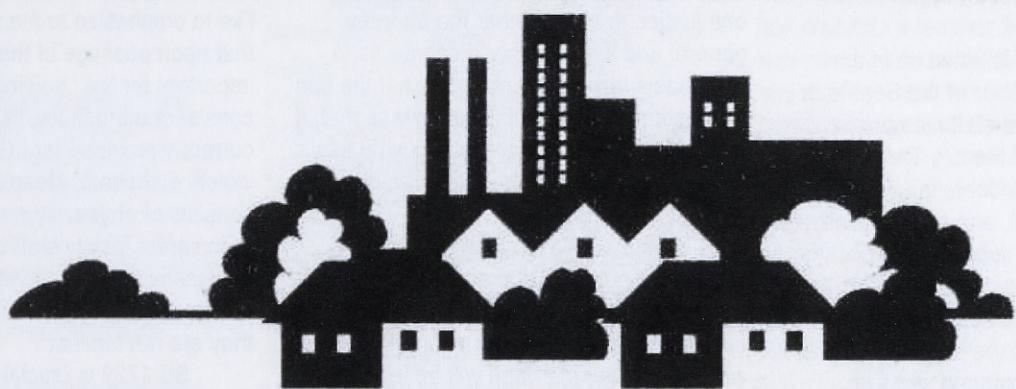
Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex?

Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.

In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684.

In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212. The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.





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